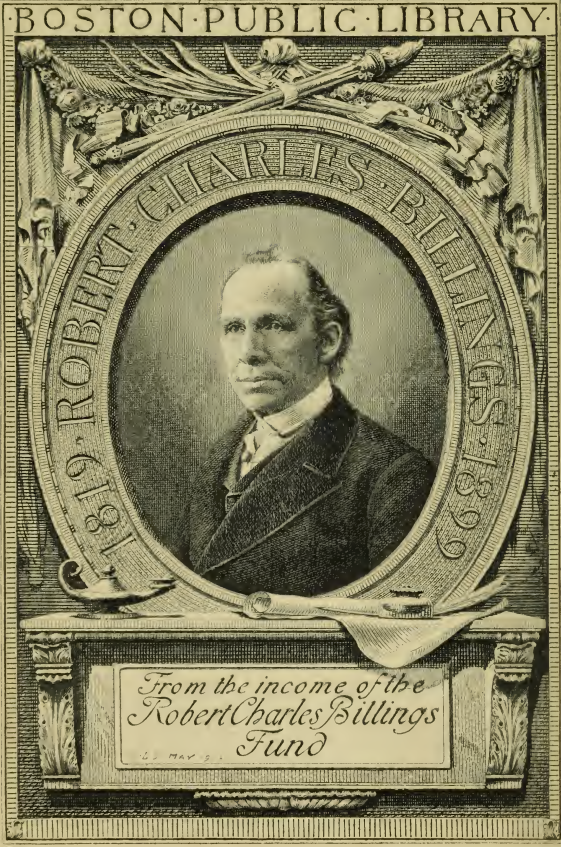


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**THE MEMORY OF
THE DEAD :: ::**

A Romantic Drama of '98
In Three Acts. :: By
Casimir Dunin Markievicz

* 1879-1900
Q

TOWER PRESS, DUBLIN.

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THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD

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ACT II.

NORAH—I have lost all heart, and there is nothing before us but Death, father, Death.

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD;
A Romantic Drama of '98, in Three
Acts. BY CASIMIR DUNIN MARKIEVICZ.

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THE TOWER PRESS

DUBLIN

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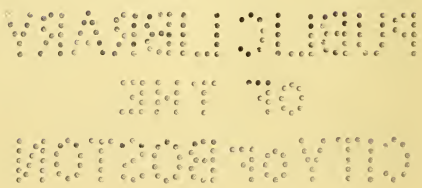
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TO
THE MEN OF '98.

*Then here's their memory——
May it be to us a guiding light
To cheer our strife for Liberty,
And teach us to unite!
Through good and ill, be Ireland still,
Though sad as their's your fate ;
And true men, be you, men,
Like those of Ninety Eight.*

—INGRAM.

CHARACTERS :

MICHAEL DOYLE, a Gentleman Farmer.

COLONEL CHARORT, Officer in General Humbert's Army.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

FATHER MORAN.

DERMOD O'DOWD. Son of Stephen O'Dowd.

ENGLISH OFFICER.

STEPHEN O'DOWD,

BRIDGID, Michael Doyle's Old Servant,

NORAH, Michael Doyle's Daughter.

ACT I.

Takes place on the morning of August 23rd, in the Sittingroom of Michael Doyle's house.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Two weeks later and at night. In the same room as Act I.

SCENE II.—The same night. In a cattle shed among the mountains between Streamstown and Dromahair.

ACT III,

The same room as Act I. Twelve months later.

First Produced on April 14th, 1910, at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, by the INDEPENDENT DRAMATIC COMPANY, with the following cast :—

Michael Doyle

Colonel Charort

James McGowan

Father Moran

Stephen O'Dowd

English Officer

Dermot O'Dowd

Bridgid

Norah

Seaghan Connolly

J. M. Carré

Edward Keegan

P. MacCartan

M. Carolan

Mervyn Columb

George Nesbit

Honor Lavelle

Constance de Markiewicz

THE MEMORY OF THE DEAD.

ACT I.

A combined dining and reception room in a well-to-do farmhouse, Large fireplace, R. Sideboard, L. A bow window, R. C. Doors, R. and L. As the curtain goes up MICHAEL DOYLE is discovered reading before the fireplace, R. He is a crippled man with well-marked features looking older than he actually is. There is a table behind him on which is to be seen the remainder of his breakfast. BRIDGID, the old servant, is standing by the table.

BRIDGID.

Have you your breakfast eaten yet, Sir ?

Pause.

Have you your breakfast eaten yet, sir ? Them books ! Will you ever stop reading them morning, noon, and night ? I'd like to know how much it costs you in candles every year, wasting them the way you do. Last night there was two of the best wax burnt away in the morning ; the night before there was only one, but on Saturday night there was three. No fortune could stand that.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Lifting his head.

Who are you talking to Bridgid ?

BRIDGID.

Just to meself, sir. Will I take the things away ?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

What are you going to take away ?

Settles down to his book again.

BRIDGID.

The breakfast, sir. Aren't you sick this morning after—

10 The Memory of the Dead.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Who's sick? Nothing the matter with Miss Norah, I hope? What were you talking about?

BRIDGID.

Nothing at all, sir. I'll be taking away the things off the table.

Places some of the breakfast things on the tray and goes towards the door.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Looking round.

Have you done what I told you?

BRIDGID.

Ah! Don't be making fun of the old woman. I'm taking the things off the table, sir—that's what I'm doing.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Continues reading.

Who in the name of goodness told you to do so?

BRIDGID.

For shure you must have got out of bed the wrong side this morning.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

What are you saying?

BRIDGID.

Nothing, sir.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Oh, Bridgid, where is Miss Norah?

BRIDGID.

And how am I to know, sir? And who knows at all where Miss Norah be's going to, stravaging over the country side the way she does. Shure she's everywhere and nowhere at once. And once she's on the wee horse it would take the west wind to keep with her.

Michael Doyle puts down his book.

Oh! young people must have their fling, and the old ones——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Interrupting her.

Something must be wrong with your tongue, Bridgid—your elucution has quite overpowered you, and to my simple question of “Where is Miss Norah?” you have given me a most involved answer which leaves me no wiser than I was before.

BRIDGID.

My head is going round, sir. And God bless my soul if I understand a word what you are saying.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It is not the least necessary that you should understand.

BRIDGID.

Faith, it is not always easy to understand English talk, and upon my word I might have been deaf for all the sense I made of what the English soldier was saying to me yesterday.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

The less you understand of what they say to you the better—and don't be irritating me by mentioning those blackguards at all.

BRIDGID.

It is not to your liking to see so many redcoats about the place.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It does not prophesy any good to anybody. Where is Miss Norah? I don't like her to be running wild over the country-side when there are so many of them about. You ought to have had the sense to stop her going out this morning.

BRIDGID.

Ah, you must not be cross with poor old Bridgid, sir. Faith it's Miss Norah that can take care of herself. And indeed she was away at four o'clock, after telling me to leave you to take it easy, and sleep it out after the long night you had at the reading.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Dear thoughtful child.

BRIDGID.

And shure I have the breakfast, keeping it hot for her, and a grand fresh egg from the bantam hen. Bridgid is not such a fool as her old master thinks.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

But why the deuce could you not tell me this before? Just like a woman.

BRIDGID.

And it's just like a man to be raising the roof on us without waiting to see if there is anything wrong at all. Whist now! isn't that the darling herself—the light heart in her singing as she comes over the fields. . . .

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Well, it's good for her to be young and not to realise all the horrors going on around her.

BRIDGID.

I must be off to the kitchen now for her breakfast.

Exit Bridgid.

Michael Doyle continues reading for a moment, but puts down his book when Norah appears at the window. She is carrying an armful of wild flowers; her hat is hanging on ribbons behind her shoulders. She leans on the window and calls gaily to her father.

NORAH.

Father, dear father, what a fine day God has sent us at last. The meadows are like carpets with the flowers. See how beautiful they are. And the birds. . . . Oh, if you could only hear them singing at the sunrise.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Come in you naughty child, you runaway girl! To desert your crippled old father and leave him to take his breakfast alone. But you are young, my dear, and flowers and birds and other gay young things

are more suitable companions for you than a cross old man. Come in, come in, and tell me all about it.

NORAH.

Springing through window.

I won't be wasting time then.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Amused.

Well, well, Norah! that's not quite the way a grown up young lady ought to behave, coming through the window like a——I always thought you ought to have been born a boy, my darling.

Norah kisses him affectionately.

Good morning, good morning, my little one. . . .

NORAH.

How are you this morning, father? Did you sleep well? I heard you going to bed so late last night.

Walks about the room untying the ribbon of her hat.

Uff! I'm hot!

MICHAEL DOYLE.

I don't wonder you're hot, it's running and jumping you are from morning to night, like Watters' young goats up on the hill.

NORAH.

Fie, father, that's not a very poetical comparison.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

My dear Norah, it is the greatest calamity of our race that we are too poetical.

NORAH.

That's what Dermot is always saying.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

And he is right.

Takes a letter from between the pages of his book.

But see I have just received a letter from Martin Davitt.

NORAH.

A letter from him. Quick! Tell me how are things

going over there? Is there any news from abroad?
Are the French——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

He feels hopeless. And, old sailor that he is, says they are like the crew of a sinking ship, who instead of obeying their officers by sticking to the pump, and sailing straight towards the nearest land, are all squabbling and disputing as to what ought to be done. All hope vanishes in big words and fine speeches!

NORAH.

Oh, father, don't say that. As long as there are any men like you and Mr. Davitt——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Smiling bitterly.

Look at me, Norah, what possible good can a crippled man like me be to our poor country? God help her.

NORAH.

But father, your experience——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

What is the good of experience when experience is crippled. What we want are strong, active young men fit to meet our allies.

NORAH.

Our allies?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Yes, our allies. General Humbert has already sailed.

NORAH.

That's great news, father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Hush dear, someone might hear you and once the news were known there would be no holding back the peasantry, led as they are by the wildest boys of the village. Oh, why is it that those who ought to be our leaders are so often in sympathy with the enemy, or at best callous and indifferent!

NORAH.

Father, would you call Dermod callous and indifferent?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Looking at her curiously.

I am glad to see that he is not quite indifferent to you, my child.

NORAH.

Embarrassed.

Father!

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Believe me he is a fine fellow, and the very man I should like to see as your husband. I am an old man, dear, and I should like to see you settled with a good man to protect you before I go. It worries me to think of leaving you alone these troublous times.

NORAH.

Sits at table.

I should like to ask you one thing. When Dermod made that speech last May, and everybody was calling him a coward, . . . I overheard all that you and his father were saying. Now, why——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Shocked.

It wasn't nice of you to be listening to men's talk that you weren't meant to hear. Anyhow the boy was right, and I understand him now. So you need not be bothering your little head about it.

NORAH.

But tell me——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

I approve of him. He loves you, and if you care for him that is enough.

NORAH.

I know that, father, but——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Well, Norah, I've been thinking, and the upshot of it all

is this—you've got to make up your mind either to name the day or send him away. It's now more than a year since he spoke, and you keep putting him off from one day to another and playing him off against James M'Gowan; getting no good for yourself, and only making bad blood between the two best boys in the countryside.

NORAH.

Really, father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Last night he, his father, and myself had a long talk, and I can tell you Dermod is a great boy.

NORAH.

I know that you think so now, but—

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You know nothing, Norah, great people don't go round talking to everybody.

NORAH.

Still people don't think as much of him as they do of James M'Gowan.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Don't compare them, Norah. James is after you, too; they are both good Irishmen, and each is serving his country in his own way, and you should be the last to make comparisons and cause jealousy between them.

NORAH.

But when James makes a speech on Sundays the people go mad about him, and would follow him anywhere—why even Father Moran calls him a great boy.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

A great pity, too. True, James is a great orator, and a great power with the people, and perhaps it's the feeling of rivalry with Dermod that makes him think more of distinguishing himself before you, by leading them, than making up his mind where he is going to lead them to.



Photo by

Roe MacMahon.

ACT I.

MICHAEL DOYLE—General Humbert has sailed.

NORAH.

I don't understand, father, and I would like to ask Dermod.—

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Ask him anything you-like.

Stephen O'Dowd and Dermod O'Dowd
are seen passing the window

But there is Dermod with his father.

Goes to the window.

Welcome, Stephen! God bless you, Dermod! It's a grand day, gentlemen. Pray come in.

Enter Stephen O'Dowd and Dermod O'Dowd.

STEPHEN O'DOWD.

It's indeed grand for the crops.

Norah goes to the window and greets Dermod.
Advancing to meet Stephen O'Dowd.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Stephen O'Dowd, on a day like this one's heart fills with hope.

STEPHEN O'DOWD.

It would be a grand day for us to march out to meet the French.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Mysteriously.

This morning I received a letter from Martin Davitt.

STEPHEN O'DOWD.

Is that a fact?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Approaching.

How foolish it is to be writing letters at this moment.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Ah, you're too wise, my boy; the letter has come all right.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

But it wouldn't be all right if Colonel Vereker or one of the Militia men got it before you.

STEPHEN O'DOWD.

Don't, don't, Dermod. Stop croaking like a raven; and besides Michael Doyle is not the only man who

got a message from Killala to-day. James M'Gowan had the news from Pat O'Connor, and he is speaking about it now to the boys outside the chapel, and Father Moran is there too. To be shure they will march out to-morrow morning, if not to-night.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

How can we stop them ?

NORAH.

You would not do that—you cannot.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

But I shall.

STEPHEN O'DOWD.

Why Michael ?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Come along, Stephen, I will explain why on our way.

There is no time to be lost—give me my hat, Norah.

Dermod, you can stay with Norah till we come back.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Very well, sir. Only too pleased.

Exeunt Michael Doyle and Stephen O'Dowd.

NORAH.

Looking after them through the window with her back turned to Dermod.

What have you done, Dermod O'Dowd ? Did you only come back to this country to crush the spirit out of every good patriot ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

I will not try to answer you now, Norah. I came here to-day to tell you again that I love you. Your father. . . .

NORAH.

Elaborately sarcastic.

You've chosen the right time to speak about yourself sir. When our unfortunate country——

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Oh, Norah, how lovely you are.

NORAH.

Indignantly interrupting him.

Pray, sir, stop your flatteries.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Be patient with me then and let me speak.

NORAH.

You can have nothing to say to me.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Perhaps I have too much.

NORAH.

Perhaps more even than a true Irishwoman would care to hear. I was brought up to know men as brave men or cowards.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Hush! I know that you're too true an Irishwoman to insult a man without giving him a chance of explaining himself.

NORAH.

Is any explanation possible?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Listen to me, Norah. There is no greater man round here than your father. He suffered that another country might gain its freedom—freedom from the same English yoke under which we are smarting. In the States he fought like a man, and he—

NORAH.

But what has all this to do with Ireland's sacred war for freedom? Now, now, when there is need of men and deeds, not words.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

In the States, Norah—your father will tell you himself—everybody joined together to fight the English. And the English, they learnt their lesson over there. So now, here, they have set Irishmen to fight Irishmen, and when Ireland is drenched with Irish blood, spilt

by Irish hands, then they will step in and deal out what they call justice.

NORAH.

What are you saying? What do you mean? Irish blood shed by Irish hands!

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Don't you know who fought at Vinegar Hill, Wexford, and all through the country? Why, Irish regiments, the Yeomanry and Militia against our Irish Patriots. Oh, the Anglo-Saxon is wise. He watches one set of Irishmen butchering the other, and quietly takes what profit he can from both.

NORAH.

It's so easy to talk like this, and it's such a waste of time. There is but one thing to be done, and that is to make an end of everyone who stands between us and freedom.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Even if they are our own flesh and blood? No, we will not save our poor country that way. Believe me, our cause is great and sacred, and it requires clean hands and a clean heart.

NORAH.

Comes towards Dermot.

I agree with that altogether.

Pause.

But this does not explain to me why you are always trying to calm the enthusiasm of the boys, and keep them quietly at home when they would be attacking Vereker; you know what he and his men are doing.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

True, they are laying waste the country, burning and destroying wherever they go, not even our women and children are spared, but does that make it right or even wise to do what James is urging us to do?

NORAH.

How do you mean?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

He would take an undisciplined mob, with no arms but pitchforks, to attack Vereker, and try to meet the French. Their march would be a blot on the history of our country, for who is to stop them murdering and destroying the property of those men who will not join with them, whose nationality they forget, and whom they look upon as their natural foes ?

NORAH.

Yes, yes.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

And, then, think of their fate when they walk blindly into the arms of the Militia, who are known to be in great force between us and our allies.

NORAH.

And what would you do if you had your way ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Oh ! I never should have allowed all these excited meetings at the Chapel, these wild speeches, which only intoxicate the boys and play into the hands of our enemies who have spies everywhere. Everything should have been kept secret. The boys should have been got together with little talk and noise, drilled and taught discipline—taught to be men. Remember, men who strike in silence, strike hard.

NORAH.

I begin to see.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

So that now—now, when at last the French are really coming, we should have been ready to join them with a body of disciplined men, led by chosen officers, instead of this wild mob, led by the wildest of the lot. James and his like.

NORAH.

But why did you not explain all this to the boys ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

But how could I speak against a policy advocated by Father Moran and James M'Gowan? Who would listen to me? Oh! if I could only make them see that the only way to save Ireland is for all Irishmen to love their country, trust their countrymen, and unite against England.

NORAH.

Yes, yes. But what is to be done?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Takes Norah's hands.

I knew, Norah, that you would understand me, and I had no difficulty in converting your father to my views. But what are we two alone to do, with all the hot-headed youths of the parish against us? We can only stand aside and wait.

NORAH.

You cannot, Dermot. Think of our poor boys led by James. What will become of them?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

What will become of them? I don't know.

NORAH.

Dermot, Dermot, you must know. You have no right to despair and stand aside. They are all good patriots and brave men. All they want are leaders who are capable——

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Interrupting.

Haven't they James and Father Moran?

NORAH.

How can you speak that way of Father Moran. He is a true patriot if ever there was one.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

I know, but he is a firebrand and a fanatic. Oh, if he were only like Father John Murphy, who realised that at a moment like this honest and true patriots of

all persuasions are needed, No country will survive where fanaticism stands before love of country, where people meeting each other ask first "Are you Papist or Protestant" instead of "Are you Irish and will you fight for your country?"

The church bells begin to ring, a crowd with drums is heard approaching.

NORAH.

At the window.

Oh, Dermod, we are talking, talking, and listen—They are blowing horns and ringing the church bells. God! Dermod, we must stop them.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

No use thinking of it. There will be more Irish blood uselessly shed.

NORAH.

Dermod. . . . I don't know how to tell you . . . listen . . . You just said that when you came here just now that you meant to ask me to fix the day for our wedding. Is that true?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

It is ; but why?

NORAH.

I am sure that if people saw the O'Dowd and Michael Doyle marrying their children, and all feasting and gaiety, they will not think that the great moment is so near ; they will think that the news of the French having been seen is only an idle rumour that has reached us.

Dermod tries to interrupt.

And then when the healths are drunk, and you will be speaking, you will get the chance of explaining to them what you have just told me. They must listen patiently to the bridegroom. So let us be married at once.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Interrupting.

No, Norah, I cannot take this seriously. A few minutes

ago you were hating and despising me, and now—
Oh it's true I came here to get a definite answer from
you, to ask you to name the day. But after all you
said, even though it's to try and save the peoples'
lives, I love you too much to accept your sacrifice.

NORAH.

Don't say that, Dermod. It is quite true that a moment
ago I thought that I hated you—and why? Because
I love you.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Norah.

NORAH.

Why, when you loved me, would you never tell me about
the things that were nearest your heart? I didn't
understand you. But now my pride will be to see you
—as my husband—fight, and if need be die for our
country.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Takes her in his arms.

For our country, Norah.

NORAH.

Then let us tell them at once—now.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

You are right, so I had better see your father and Father
Moran—and James I must tell him.

NORAH.

Oh, I'll tell him.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

But he loves you.

NORAH.

This is not the moment for jealousy.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

You cannot use your influence over him, when you
know that he loves you.

NORAH.

But you forget James and I were brought up together.

We were friends and comrades before all.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Wait. . . . I hear someone coming.

Enter James M'Gowan.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Sorry to interrupt a pleasant conversation. Mr. O'Dowd is always a favourite with the ladies, and no wonder, considering his love for skirts and bright eyes.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

We need not discuss that now, sir.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Some people are always quick at finding a way to avoid a dangerous topic. Allow me to assure you that I should not dream of intruding myself, and interrupting your courtship, if it were not for your father's wish, Miss Doyle.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Then proceed with your message, without wasting time in idle remarks.

NORAH.

Calm, gentlemen. What is it, James ?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I have the honour to be the bearer of a message to Mr. Dermot O'Dowd. He is requested to join the meeting at the chapel. At the same time I must apologise for interrupting your love-making ; one is unprepared for such scenes these strenuous times.

NORAH.

You have no right to speak in this way to me, or my betrothed.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Your betrothed ?

Sneering.

Oh, that explains all.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

What do you mean by this remark, sir ?

NORAH.

Oh, don't answer him, James ; I forbid you to quarrel.
Come, be friends.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Putting his hands behind his back, and
shrugging his shoulders.

I am sorry I have too little—

Bowing to Norah.

or perhaps too much in common with this gentleman.

NORAH.

For shame, James, Dermod, remember that you are both
Irishmen.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

No doubt. But there are Irishmen, and Irishmen.

In the meantime a tapping is heard at the
window, and Dermod, who is pacing
the room, becomes aware of it. The Dumb
Boy appears at the window. He takes
his hat off and hands it to Dermod, who
slips open the lining with his knife and
withdraws a paper which he reads.

NORAH.

Won't you believe your little playfellow when she tells
you that Dermod is as sincere in his love of Ireland as
any of you.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

But he is always for waiting and reasoning, and pouring
cold water on all our plans

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Turning suddenly towards James.

Can I trust you, James M'Gowan ?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Is that a question to put to a gentleman, sir ?

NORAH.

James! For Ireland's sake.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

What I am going to tell you must remain a secret for
the present.

Norah makes a move as if to go.

Stay, Norah ; I want you to witness our agreement.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I do not expect to come to any agreement with you, sir.

NORAH.

Wait, James.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

The French are landing at Killala.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Shouting.

The French are landing at Killala?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Hush, quiet! Some one may be passing.

Closes window.

Yesterday morning General Humbert was sighted at the mouth of Killala Bay. . . .

NORAH.

Dermod——

DERMOD O'DOWD.

We must make our preparations with the utmost secrecy.

Six of us must be ready to start in a few days, and at a moment's notice.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Only six? I don't understand; what about the boys?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

See, here are our written orders from Martin Davit.

Reads.

“Six trusty men are to hold themselves in readiness to start directly they receive word that General Humbert has landed. They are to make their way to Ballina, when they will receive the arms and ammunition to be distributed in the neighbouring districts. A flying column to be formed immediately. The road from Ballina to Sligo to be guarded. Every effort to be made to check Col. Vereker's advance from Sligo.”

NORAH.

But, Dermod, you will never get safely to Ballina.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Oh, six of us will get through easily enough, going at

night by the bogs and the mountains.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I am with you, Dermot. For the others, I think that Paddy and Martin Sweeny, and the O'Donovans are the men for you. And now shake hands, we must forget our quarrels. Think only, the French have come.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

For God's sake, be cautious, James; if any of the boys heard you, who is to stop them, in their enthusiasm, from going out all unarmed to meet their friends. ?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

But the news may come before we can get off.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Mr. Doyle and my father must be told at once. They and Father Moran will have to keep the boys quietly at home.

Brigid enters excitedly.

BRIDGID.

Oh, Miss, all the people from the Chapel are coming down here, and they are carrying the master on their shoulders. Listen to them now.

Noise heard outside.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Can they have heard ?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Is seen through the window carried by the crowd.

Steady, boys, steady. There, that will do.

Enters on the arm of Father Moran and Mr. O'Dowd.

FATHER MORAN.

God save all here. We were waiting for you by the chapel, my boy, till we grew so impatient that we came to see what was keeping you. I suppose James told you of the letter he got from Pat O'Connor ? There's strange ships in the offing, and for shure it's

the French. A fishing boat was nearly run down last night, but they are a good way off yet.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

This is great news, gentlemen, that James here has been telling us.

FATHER MORAN.

God always helps a righteous cause, but we must not be idle. We must remember "that Heaven helps those who help themselves." They are calling for you, James ; you had best go out and speak to them.

Shouts outside of "James M'Gowan," etc.

You have a word to say to them.

Shouts outside of "Dermod O'Dowd."

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Father, before I go let me impress on you that we can't march out to-day or even to-morrow. For God's sake, listen to what Dermod has to tell you—he will explain it all. Now, I'm off to speak to the boys.

Exit James.

FATHER MORAN.

What's taken the boy with his delay ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Wait, Father, and before you condemn us read this despatch.

FATHER MORAN.

Reads despatch.

The French have come ! God save Ireland !

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I. Same as Act I.

The room is in a great state of disorder, chairs overturned, curtains torn down, and the floor littered with the contents of the bookshelves and cupboards. The clock has stopped. As the curtain rises Norah is discovered standing in the dark room looking into the moonlight. Michael Doyle is sitting half asleep by the empty grate. There is a long silence. Enter Brigid carrying a candle, and keening softly to herself. She stumbles over an overturned chair.

BRIGID.

The Lord have mercy on my soul. What's this for at all? Are they gone? The blackhearted murderers! May the curse of God be on them.

She begins to try and gather the things together.

The whole house upset in search of conspiracy, and not content till they had the best teapot, and the silver spoons that the old mistress—God rest her soul—had on her marriage. Conspiracy—conspiracy—I never heard that called to silver before.

Sees Norah at window.

The Lord above protect us. Miss Norah, is it you that's there all the time?

NORAH.

What is it, Brigid?

BRIGID.

Putting down the candle and going towards Norah.

It's meself, Miss. And, oh, Miss a gradh, what will become of us all at all, at all?

NORAH.

Interrupting.

Stop, Brigid. Hush! Don't you see the master is asleep?

BRIGID.

The poor, dear master. God knows he was in need of a rest.
Cannons heard in the distance.

BRIDGID.

The Lord help us, a stoir mo chroidhe, but what is that?

NORAH.

It's the big guns again.

BRIDGID.

Prays aloud.

It's a wrong you've done, Miss Norah, Ma'am, to be getting married a year like this.

Guns heard.

And then to let your poor man—God rest his soul—go out to his death.

NORAH.

Hush, Bridgid, you don't know what you are saying.

BRIDGID.

Do you see, a stoir, the red spots on the sky? And the queer big star that does be strealing across the heavens? Surely God put them there to be showing' us that He is angry with us all. We're after forgetting Him and He is punishing us.

NORAH.

You musn't speak like that. What has come over you?

BRIDGID.

Maybe you think there's little sense in what I'm saying, Miss, but the old woman knows—she knows.

NORAH.

Knows? What do you know, Bridgid? Can you even tell me what has become of Dermod?

More cannons heard in the distance.

BRIDGID.

All the brave boys that went for to fight the English—none of them will come back any more.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Waking.

Nonsense, nonsense, Bridgid. What the deuce is the good of talking like that—you are crazed with fright. Why the little sense you had is entirely frightened away. Off to the kitchen with you.

NORAH.

Oh, father, don't be cross with her, she was so terrified by the soldiers, poor old thing.

BRIDGID.

It's not that I'm frightened, Master, but I know.

You see, Master, God is talking to us. ^{Guns heard.} Ay, there's many people dying just now. God rest their souls.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

What do you know about it? Enough! Out with you.

BRIDGID.

As you please, sir.

You won't blame me for the destruction that's in it? ^{Pointing at furniture.} I'll be going to the kitchen then. Oh, well, well.

Exit.

NORAH.

You are a little hard on the poor old thing, father; she is almost off her head with the terror of it all.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Who can be kind or gentle in these horrible times? And maybe after all, the hard words will bring her to her senses quicker than anything else; you yourself, Norah, deserve great praise for the way in which you have kept yourself under control these long, terrible days—any man might envy you.

NORAH.

Envy me? Oh, father, don't say that; in these few days I have lived a thousand years. All that I have seen—Oh, I can't believe it myself. When Vereker entered the village, and I saw people shot and mutilated, I thought at first it was some horrible nightmare. When they came here to cross-examine you, oh, I felt that I could stick a knife into any one of them. I understand now how people can kill each other!

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Norah ?

NORAH.

When I saw those two poor little lads, Seamus and Pat, hanging from the gallows by the chapel, and soldiers dragging Moira by her long curls down the street, I felt something die in my heart. May God forgive me, but I hate them !

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Hush, Norah, not so loud—if any of them hear you.

NORAH.

Let them hang me—their work is to hang.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Come, come, darling, Bridgid must have been talking to you and you have caught the old fool's excitement. Be calm, for God's sake, my little one. It breaks my heart to see you in such a state. See, Norah, if I was not a cripple I would not be lying here like a dead dog.

Guns heard.

I, too should be in the field with them all.

Pause.

NORAH.

If you were not crippled you would be with Paddy on the gallows.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

On the gallows.

NORAH.

After they had searched the house I heard that young Captain say to Colonel Vereker, "Would you have the old dog swing, sir?"

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Is that the way they speak of an old man? Our noble conquerors.

NORAH-

Colonel Vereker then said : "Gad ! Can't you see he's a cripple ? Ha, ha ! I wish we could cripple them all

in Ireland, and then we could go back and leave them barking away quite harmlessly in their kennels.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

So that's what saved my life. So that's English generosity. To spare the life of a helpless, harmless cripple. God, if they only knew that Stephen and I were the leaders. and that Dermod and James went from this house to fetch the arms.

NORAH.

Oh, father, I ought not to have told you this. I didn't think. It only makes you suffer more, and surely you've suffered enough. But really I hardly know what I am saying. The fear for Dermod, my Dermod's sake—life comes over me like a black cloud, and I see nothing but dark abysses around me. Father, I am hopeless. I have lost heart, and there is nothing for us but death, father, death.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Norah, dear.

NORAH.

What can have become of them? Are they dead or in Vereker's hands? Why did I marry him, if it was only to be left to mourn him my whole life long? Father, would it be right——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

My daughter would it be right if the Irish cause perished? Would it be right if the Irish people put their own affairs before their country's sorrows?

NORAH.

I know, I know, father. But I forget myself in my pain. Dermod would be glad to hear you speak to me like that. Thank you, father, your words give me strength. But think, it is a fortnight since they rode out, and they were to have been back in three days. We cannot help them—we cannot even find out their fate.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

There is nothing to be done but to pray and to wait for God's mercy to come.

NORAH.

Will it ever come?

Goes to the window.

See the gallows casting their shadow across the lurid sky, stained blood red with the flames from our ruined homes. Hark! Father, do you hear? Footsteps—yes, heavy footsteps. Can it be Dermod? or is it only the English again?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Blow out the candle, Quick, Norah.

NORAH.

Extinguishes the candle and goes to her father. Someone is heard approaching and Colonel Charort enters through the window carrying the Dumb Boy's inanimate body. Colonel Charort lays the body on the floor and proceeds to lock and bar the dark room in a listening attitude. His pursuers are heard approaching the house at full gallop and then passing by.

COLONEL CHARORT.

Il nous ont manqué cette fois.

NORAH.

It's a French soldier, father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Hush.

Pause, during which nothing is heard but the heavy breathing of the wounded boy.

COL. CHARORT.

Qui est là? Who goes there? Answer or I shoot.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

God be praised. It's a Frenchman. You are heartily welcome, sir, though it's but a poor reception I can give you with my house in ruins.

COL. CHARORT.

Thank you, sir, I am indeed grateful—a little change

arter the cannons and bayonets is most acceptable. But pray do not disturb yourselves on my account. Here is a young patriot of your's who wants your care. I believe he is dying, poor child.

NORAH.

A child dying ?

COL. CHARORT.

There is someone else in the room besides you, sir, if I be not mistaken. . . .

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Yes, sir, my daughter Norah.

COL. CHARORT.

I cannot see you, Mademoiselle, but judging from your voice, you should be young and beautiful, and to be a skilful nurse is surely one of your high qualities.

NORAH.

I can dress a wound, sir. Let me see him.

Examines boy.

Ah . . . I can feel his blood oozing through the bandage . . .

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Rising.

You can't do anything without a light . . . I will fetch you one . . .

Goes towards door.

Bridgid . . . Bridgid !

COL. CHARORT.

I have not much skill in surgery, Mademoiselle, and not much time, but when the poor boy was hit I did my best to stop the hemorrhage with my handkerchief . . . very maladroitly, is it not, Mademoiselle ? It was the best I could do in our flight.

NORAH.

Flight ? What do you mean, sir ?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Approaching with candle.

Flight ?

COL. CHARORT.

Hélas ! flight . . . We are beaten and hunted like a flock of sheep.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Good God ! the French beaten.

COL. CHARORT.

Beaten ? Yes, beaten. . . . But it was not so when we first landed two weeks ago ; victory followed victory ; but such victories were almost worse than defeats. . . . A thousand men cannot hold out for ever. . . . We come here on the understanding that we find an organised army of patriots, and what find we instead ? Mon Dieu—but it is not worth the trouble of talking about.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

That's true, sir—too true.

COL. CHARORT.

We distributed muskets and ammunition——

NORAH.

You distributed the arms ?

COL. CHARORT.

With a bow.

The beautiful lady would like to carry a musket ? Oh, but her hands are too small and too delicate. But parole d'honneur, mere children were demanding muskets from us.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Pardon an old man's anxiety, sir, but would you remember if a young man called Dermod O'Dowd came with five comrades to fetch a supply of arms from you ?

COL. CHARORT.

Oh, those Irish names ; if to remember them all. So many people came.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

He spoke French well.

COL. CHARORT.

Spoke French . . . Wait, let me see.

Takes out his pocketbook and reads from it.

Hum . . . What name did you say?

NORAH.

Breathlessly.

Dermod O'Dowd.

COL. CHARORT.

Merci, Mademoiselle. I find here O'Dowd and James—
James——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

M'Gowan?

COL. CHARORT.

You are quite right, sir. On the 28th August I supplied them with 200 muskets and 5,000 rounds of ammunition, for the regiment formed in the district of Streamstown. Mais pardon, but may I ask the name of the hamlet I am in?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You are in Streamstown, sir. But the boys, sir, the boys? Dermod and James; they have not reached us with the weapons.

COL. CHARORT.

C'est bien simple, I am afraid, Monsieur, that your friends have been intercepted. It is true that they knew the country, but after what I have seen myself, I think that it is extremely improbable that they have succeeded in passing through Lord Cornwallis's lines.

NORAH.

Oh, father, father, Dermod then——

COL. CHARORT.

Mdlle. interests herself in this gentleman?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

He is her husband, sir.

COL. CHARORT.

Her husband; pardon then, Madame, that I have addressed

you as Mademoiselle ; and permit me to join you in hoping that Monsieur, your brave husband, will soon return to you in safety. Mon Dieu, but I hope he had the sense to throw away those arms and ammunition.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Throw them away ; what do you mean ?

COL. CHARORT.

Monsieur, they are no use to us now.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Now ?

COL. CHARORT.

Looking at him curiously.

Ma foi ; but have you not heard of our defeat at Ballinamuck ? General Humbert is prisoner, and I regret to have to tell you that thousands of your brave countrymen have lost their lives.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Is this then the end of all our hopes ? Merciful God, dost Thou then allow Ireland to perish, and Thine enemies to triumph over her ? Art Thou then thirsty for Irish blood ?

NORAH.

Father——he's dying !

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Rises, supporting himself on his crutches, his face quite decomposed.

Dying, you say ; he is happier dead than alive. There is no God ; there is no justice. There will be no Ireland any more . . . Nothing but the English with murder and blood and death. . . . Ah. . . .
Norah. . . .

Сидит в кресле.

Collapses in his chair.

Ah. . . .

NORAH.

Goes to father.

Father, father.

COL. CHARORT.

Michael Doyle sobs heavily.

He is crying, the poor old gentleman. His heart of a true patriot is breaking, in hearing of his country's defeat. There is no shame in patriotic tears, Madame. Cry if you can.

Looks at Norah

But hélas, your sorrow is too great to allow you to cry.

NORAH.

And I will not cry.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Pulling himself together.

Excuse me, sir, and pardon my weakness, and forgetfulness. I forgot to ask you when you came here how long it is since you've eaten and drunk. You will get a poor impression of Irish hospitality.

Norah crosses to boy.

COL. CHARORT.

I thank you, sir, but pray you not to trouble about me. Will you and Madame give all your attention to the little boy.

NORAH.

He seems asleep; but you, sir, must be hungry and thirsty.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Yes, Norah; tell Bridgid to prepare something to eat, if anything is left in the house.

Exit Norah. Colonel Charort follows her to the door, then returns to Michael Doyle, looking carefully all round him.

COL. CHARORT.

I have no right to touch anything . . . My time is not my own, and any delay may prove fatal to those I serve under. I am the bearer of most important despatches, and this unfortunate boy was to have led me across the mountains.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Giving a sign of despair.

What despatches can be of any importance now, sir?

Now that Humbert has been captured and his army with our patriots slaughtered.

COL. CHARORT.

I see that I can trust you, sir.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You can, sir.

Norah appears at the door carrying a tray with food, and seeing them in earnest conversation, stops suddenly.

COL. CHARORT.

Monsieur will understand, that my mission and my destination are secret, and that it is only the hopelessness of the situation that forces me to disclose them. This brave lad, who was to lead me across the mountains, will not be able to move for a long time, and I, a stranger, will never reach my destination without a reliable guide.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

But what is your destination, if I may ask ?

COL. CHARORT.

It will be of no use to proceed unless I can reach Donegal to-morrow.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Aye, and it's a long road, sir ; and there's not one of the boys left in the village.

COL. CHARORT.

Then I must start alone, sir, and God will be my guide. Find me a fresh horse. The lives of so many people depends on my arriving in time.

During this time Norah has been setting the table and listening attentively.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You couldn't get as far as Dromahair across the mountain. Oh, if Dermod were only here !

Looks round and calls.

Norah . . . Norah.

Pause.

And now, sir, as we are alone, I will tell you. This poor girl of mine was only just married to Dermot O'Dowd when he took the boys and went to fetch the arms from you.

COL. CHARORT.

Only just married! Ah, it is true that the Irishman will put everything aside for his country. It would rejoice your heart to see how your Irish boys can fight. I saw the Brigade fighting abroad. They were brave, but what will they say when I go back and tell them how I saw bands of barefooted peasants, old men and little boys—almost unarmed, facing the regular troops, and each of them knew that the rope was waiting for every man who was taken with arms in his hands. Notwithstanding that, with song and clamour they went to meet the foe, running down the hill straight into the militia's fire. They covered the meadows with their lifeless bodies and for every one killed there were ten ready to take his place and fight for every inch of this blood-stained Irish soil.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Ay, e you're speaking the truth, sir, and you're speaking it well.

COL. CHARORT.

Monsieur, you flatter me. The sights of battle have for many years been like daily bread to me, and my heart has grown hard with the sights and sounds of men dead and dying. But to see mere children dying with the courage of veterans—that, sir, is a sight that moves even the most hardened soldier of fortune to tears, and makes him realise that for some people fighting is more than the great game of war.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

For us, sir, it means freedom or death.

COL. CHARORT.

Ah, freedom, freedom. It was our guiding light when disembarking at Killala. We marched triumphant into Ballina. Over 3,000 patriots joined us at once, and the British, sir, Militia, Yeomanry, and all, flew miserably to Castlebar. Humbert did not lose time—quick march was ordered—through bogs and rocks we climbed in silence. It was a dark warm night, and one could almost hear one's heart beat quick with excitement to meet the accursed Anglo-Saxon. The sun rose gloriously over the mountains, and beneath us, hidden in mist and fog, lay the town of Castlebar. I was with Humbert; he was mounted on a little Irish horse, he looked down on the town, and said with his clear ringing voice—"Eh bien, mes amis; nous allons faire une visite matinale à Messieurs les Anglais"—and the trumpet sounded "Charge." But we dashed forward, sir, dashed, and then the enemy's cannon spoke, but no power could stop us. Before we reached the town gates, the English—infantry, cavalry, artillery—all were flying before us. What a sight, sir! Ah, sir, on that glorious morning the phantom of Liberty was as near to us and clear to us—

Breaks down.

Ah, but now, sir—Well it's no use to break our hearts over what is past. I have no time to loose. Can you provide me with a horse, sir?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Rising on his crutches.

There are two good horses in the meadow below. Would you be able to help me to saddle, sir?

COL. CHARORT.

Looking at him with admiration.

I salute you, sir, as the bravest man I have ever met. But I cannot accept this offer.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Trying to move on his crutches.

Look, sir, I am not so weak after all. I shall be able to guide you.

Stumbles and almost falls. Colonel Charort catches and supports him, then leads him back to his chair.

COL. CHARORT.

You see, sir, that your soul is strong, but your body— I shall have to go alone, and there is no time to be lost.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Covering his face with his hands.

God! it is hard; if I only had a son to give you in my stead.

Norah, dressed as a boy, appears in the doorway and listens to the last sentence, she steps forward.

NORAH.

Father, you have forgotten that you have a daughter— I am at your service, sir. You shall reach Donegal to-morrow.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Norah!

COL. CHARORT.

Madame!

NORAH.

I see, sir, that you have not touched your supper. You and Bridgid must take care of the poor wounded boy.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Anxiously.

You intend to guide this gentleman? But think, Norah, you know little of these mountains, and the way is long and hard to find.

NORAH.

Anyway I know them better than a stranger. You must let me pay back some of the debt we owe to these brave Frenchmen.



Photo by

Roe MacMahon.

ACT II.

COLONEL CHARORT—As long as there are such true Patriots as you and your daughter, Ireland will survive and will yet be free.

COL. CHARORT.

Thank you, Madame, but this is too dangerous an enterprise for a lady.

NORAH.

Ah, sir, you Frenchmen are too gallant. But believe me, sir, if there are men in Ireland ready to die for their country, there are just as many women.

COL. CHARORT.

Enough, Madame, I approve your sentiment and I am ready to follow you.

Bridgid appears at the door in a distraught condition keening softly to herself.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

God has inspired you, Norah; you are the only thing left to me to love, and it's hard to part with you. But I am willing to let you go even though I have little hope of ever seeing you again.

Bridgid moves about and picking up odds and ends off the floor.

They are all gone—all gone.

Suddenly she discovers wounded boy on couch.

NORAH.

Kissing her father and preparing to go.

God bless you, father.

Turning to Colonel Charort.

I am ready, sir.

COL. CHARORT.

Before we go permit me to say, sir, that though the allies are defeated, I believe that as long as there are such true patriots as you and your daughter, Ireland will survive and will yet be free. Good bye, sir.

They move together towards the door.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

God keep you both in safety.

Exeunt Norah and Colonel Charort.

He has taken all from me. My home ruined. My child taken from me. But I believe that in some

mysterious way His purpose will be brought to pass, though only the crippled and the weak minded be left. Well, God's will be done.

BRIDGID.

Still wandering about and muttering.

Aye, God's will be done. The boy is dead.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.—A cattle shed on the mountain side.

As the curtain rises James M'Gowan is seen lying on a couch of heather and covered with an overcoat. His head is bandaged. Dermot O'Dowd is sitting on a stone by his side. The scene is lit by a small hand lamp.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

And, so Dermot, you must not delay any longer; you've done everything for me that a good friend can do, but, alas, I feel weaker every hour.

DERMOT O'DOWD.

Courage, James. Your fever is going down.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

And my life is going out with it, so what is the use of your staying? You have no right to leave your old father in such mortal anxiety about you—and think of your young wife.

DERMOT O'DOWD.

No, James, I have sworn not to leave you, so it's only wasting breath to talk about it. I am going to see you through.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I can say no more.

Dermod, what became of Paddy and Martin ?

Long pause.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Turning his head away.

I don't know.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Yes, yes ; you do. Tell me, I prefer to know the truth rather than lie here tormenting myself with suppositions. Tell me exactly what happened.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Well, can you remember when they surrounded us ?

JAMES MCGOWAN.

I can't say that I remember much. There is a sort of mist in my head. Give me a drop of water, Dermod.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Giving James a drink from his hat.

Quiet, keep quiet ; you are really too weak even to listen.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

No, no ; I'm all right—go on.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Well, the first thing I saw was you falling off your horse with an ugly-looking gash in your head—there was no time to look what the others were doing. I had seen them at my side the moment before.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Aye, the poor brave boys.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

I spurred forward and fired my pistol in a big yeoman's ear. God rest his soul. He was in the act of finishing you off.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

He'll never be slaughtering patriots any more, that's sure.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

I did not think that there was much hope of your being alive; but any way I did not like leaving you there, so I took you in my arms and tried to mount. In so doing my stirrup gave way, and I came heavily to the ground.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

You, too!

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Yes, and that's how the both of us come to be alive.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

How do you mean?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

You see the man who was attacking me fired just as I fell, and he missed me. His bullet must have grazed the mare, for she dashed off at full gallop.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Good heavens! and what did you do?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Well, there you were lying helpless on the ground, and I on foot almost unarmed. The soldier pulled up, and, taking a steady aim at me with his pistol, politely ordered me to surrender.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Good God!

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Better to be shot than hung I thought, so I made a dash for him with my sword. Click went the pistol, but it was empty, and down he went. There was no need for a second thrust, so I seized his horse, laid you across the front of the saddle, and mounting behind you, galloped away.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

So you saved my life. How can I ever repay you?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

When I turned back I could see nothing of the boys on account of the soldiers and the smoke from the

muskets of them firing after us. The bullets came whistling and singing round our heads. They must have been very bad shots to miss us in the way they did. As I had got a good start on them they did not give chase, but nevertheless I pushed on rapidly up the valley till I got round the corner by the black rocks. There I pulled up to give the horse his wind. I found that you were not so bad as I had thought—and everything seemed so quiet and peaceful—suddenly a volley, and then silence—you know what that means.

Pause.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Anyhow, poor fellows, they escaped the shame of the rope.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

But another hundred muskets have fallen into the enemy's hands only to be used against us.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

It's too terrible to think of, Dermot. Why didn't we stop at home, and just do what the others were all doing?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Don't excite yourself, James.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

And, now, what are we to say to the people of Streamstown when we return — fugitives, beaten and wounded?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

When they see our plight they will understand that though we failed we have done our best.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

It was an unlucky idea of yours, Dermot, that we six could possibly get through; and it will only have brought the curse of the people on us. We slipped away unbeknownst to fetch the arms, and only two of us return, and we covered with shame and dishonour.

50 The Memory of the Dead.

Oh, your strategy, Dermod.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Stop, stop; you are only injuring yourself by all this talk and excitement.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

What does that matter now? I would sooner have been shot than have to face the people, and tell them the story of our failure.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Would it make you any happier if all the boys had been with us and killed, wounded, or prisoners, like poor Paddy and Martin, and the others? Don't you remember what difficulty we had in passing through the lines going out, and there were only six of us?

JAMES MCGOWAN.

It's all very well for you to talk and explain; we've had about enough of that.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Bitterly.

If you had listened to my talk—as you call it—we should not be here now in this miserable plight. Perhaps you have forgotten that we were practically back through the lines when you—in spite of my most earnest request for absolute silence—fired that unlucky shot that showed our whereabouts to the British forces.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Good Lord! You'll be saying next that it's all my fault. Anyhow I brought down my man, so there's one Englishman the less. And he thinking there was not so much as the end of his nose sticking out from behind that rock.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

One Englishman the less. And at what a price! Seamus and Paddy dead, yourself dangerously wounded, and horses and ammunition in the enemy's hands. And how many more Englishmen are there still between

us and freedom?

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Perhaps I was wrong, and it was my fault, so leave me to die here. And go you back and tell the people of Streamstown that James M'Gowan did his best and failed.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Don't don't talk of my leaving you, James. Boys like you can't be spared, and you'll live to fight for Ireland yet. Wait a moment and I'll fetch some water—there's none left. And for God's sake keep quiet. The pistols are beside you.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

I'll be as quiet as I can, but be quick, Dermot, or I shall die of thirst.

Exit Dermot.

James is left alone tossing uneasily on his couch and speaking disjointedly.

Ah, my head; my head. And so it was my fault—my fault. Yes, I see it is all my fault—my fault.

Turns restlessly and draws up the cloak that is covering him. Then listens intently and puts his hat over the light. Some one is heard approaching outside.

That's not Dermot—there are horses. Lucky dog Dermot, to be outside. Here am I caught like a wounded rat in a hole, but even a rat can sell his life dearly.

Takes out the pistols and draws himself into a crouching position.

NORAH.

Appearing at the door in boy's clothes.

I think, sir, that we shall be safe enough here for a while. The light we saw can only have been the shepherds, and we can trust them. But I'm afraid the door is too low for the horses.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

I know that voice—who can it be?

COL. CHARORT.

Outside.

I shall try and do my best for the horses on the lee side of this hut. Madame, they are exhausted.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Madame? Good Lord, It's Norah.

Enters Norah. In a whisper "Norah."

NORAH.

Who's there? Who's calling me?

JAMES MCGOWAN.

With an effort.

It's me, Norah; James.

NORAH.

James—and Dermod? Where is Dermod?

She looks round, stumbles, and leans against the wall, shaken with sobs.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Uncovering lantern.

Norah. Be reassured—Dermod is safe.

NORAH.

Between laughter and tears.

Safe. Dermod is safe.

Approaching James.

But you are wounded, James. What has happened to you? Your face is as white as a sheet.

Kneels beside the couch.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

I can't, Norah.

Falls over. She catches him in her arms.

COL. CHARORT.

Entering.

More of your unfortunate patriots. Madame, the country is like a large battlefield strewed with the dead and dying. What can I do with this unfortunate gentleman?

NORAH.

Could you find some water? He has fainted. There is probably a spring near.

COL. CHARORT.

Goes to the door, then stops and listens.

Someone is coming. A man is making his way to the house. I cannot quite see, but I think he is alone.

Pause, during which Col. Charort stands listening at the door, in an attitude of defence and offence.

Qui est la ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Heard outside.

Un ami.

Enter Dermod with his hat full of water.

Dermod and Col. Charort watch each other for a while, then Col. Charort takes the hat from Dermod, and passes it to Norah, who tries to bring James to his senses.

COL. CHARORT.

Surely I have had the pleasure of meeting you before, sir ? Your face seems familiar to me. Ma foi, yes. A week ago at Ballina—it was to you I trusted a load of arms and ammunition.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Saluting him in a military fashion.

Alas, sir, I regret to have to report to you that they have fallen into the hands of the English. Four of my comrades are missing, and the other is lying there dangerously wounded. But what in the name of God are you doing here, Colonel ?

COL. CHARORT.

Humbert is captured, sir, and we are beaten irreparably. The Irish campaign is at an end.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Looking round anxiously.

Hush, sir. If my wounded comrade were to hear your terrible news it would finish him. He is already almost delirious with despair.

They talk in whispers aside, while James comes slowly to himself.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Now, steady, Martin. Are you ready, Paddy? Paddy and Martin are dead—Dermod said so.

NORAH.

Bending over him.

Hush! James, you are here. It is all right.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Am I dreaming? You, Norah?

NORAH.

Turning quickly.

I am guiding Colonel Charort across the mountains to meet General Napper Tandy, who is expected to land near Donegal to-morrow, and he is the bearer of important despatches. I fear we shall not be in time, as I missed the way in the night, and the fog----

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Poor child—you lost your way. And how many more of Ireland's children will lose their way in the night and the fog before Ireland is free. Come, sir, follow me, your despatches will be delivered in time.

COL. CHARORT.

Who has been sitting in a hopeless position—his head on his hands—looks up at these words.

You mean, sir—I do not understand—it would be too much to expect of any man. You cannot leave Madame.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Not a word more. This boy will stay here and do his best for James M'Gowan, and I will come back for them when I have left you safe with your countrymen in Donegal.

COL. CHARORT.

But our horses are quite unfit to travel further.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

There are two fresh ones outside. As there is no time to be lost I must ask you to give me your assistance in changing the saddles. And we had better start at

once. God be with you, my brave child. The life of James is in your hands.

NORAH.

God be your guide.

Takes scapular off, and hangs it round
Dermod's neck.

This carries a blessing, and will give you strength to succeed and bring you safe home to us.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Aside to Norah.

James must not know till he is much better what has happened. It would kill him.

NORAH.

I understand. But you—you are going. When shall I ever see you again? Dermod!

Breaks down.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Lifting up his hand.

Hush! For Ireland's sake.

To Col. Charort.

We must be starting, sir.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE—Same as Act I.

As the curtain goes up, Norah is discovered sitting R., with a basket of needlework. James M'Gowan is pacing the room. It is a hot summer's night, and the windows are ajar.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Stopping suddenly.

Then this is your last word, Norah

NORAH.

It is, and if we are to remain friends I must ask you not to speak in this way again. How is it that you have so little feeling? Surely you should be able to understand, and to respect my sorrow.

JAMES MCGOWAN.

Forgive me, Norah, I do understand. And you know that I respect your sorrow; but I find it hard to keep my feelings to myself. I have loved you so dearly all these years.

NORAH.

Stop, please. I have neither the right nor the inclination to listen to that kind of talk.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I understand your scruples perfectly. As Dermod's wife, of course, you cannot listen to me. But as his widow or deserted by him.

NORAH.

How many more times must I forbid you to mention Dermod's name to me, James. You ought to be ashamed of yourself pestering me with declarations of love, *we*, the wife of the man to whom you owe your life—shame.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

I wish that he had left me to die, since I have only lived

to earn your hatred and contempt.

NORAH.

These words come badly from an old friend and a brave man, like you, James. You know quite well that I have nothing but friendly feeling for you, James, as long as you do not try to force your love upon me. We could be the same good friends as before, if you would only realise that I can never love you, and that, no matter if Dermod is dead or alive, whether he comes back or not, my feelings towards you will not alter or change.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Dear Norah, forgive me. I never shall forget how you nursed me in that rough hut on the mountain side, like a good sister. Don't think that I would intentionally hurt your feelings. But, oh, I cannot bear to see you breaking your heart, and wasting your life. The sight of your misery seems to force the words out of me. If I could give you any comfort about Dermod, you know I would ; but what has become of him God only knows. I can never quite believe with the rest that he is a traitor. But its all so mysterious, and people are saying such strange things about his disappearance. Paddy Costello was telling me only yesterday——

NORAH.

Enough ! You will gain nothing by trying to force into my ears the tales that horrid people are spreading about Dermod—will you stop, or must I leave the room, for I will not listen to you any more.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Oh, Norah, don't misunderstand me ; I assure you that when I think seriously, I don't believe any of the things they are saying about Dermod—I only say that when a man is not heard of for over twelve months, and his name has not appeared in any of the lists

published of those executed or in prison——

NORAH.

How cruel and persistent you are, James—I never would have thought that you'd have said such things to me.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Passionately.

When a man loves a woman as I love you, Norah——

Enter Bridgid, who has been listening in the doorway.

BRIDGID.

Please, sir, will you be bringing the master in, he grows more helpless every day, God spare him?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Certainly, Bridgid.

Exi James.

BRIDGID.

Looking after him.

Isn't he the nice kind gentleman, Miss?

NORAH.

Puts work by.

Very. Is supper ready? It is just nine o'clock, and Father Moran will be here any moment.

BRIDGID.

Indeed and he will, and he'll find the table set, and the supper ready waiting—keeping nice and hot by the fire till he comes. But, Master James, he's the grand man at the farm—sure you'd hardly know there'd been anything, the way he's got things straight after the soldiers—and the crops in. Sure the master himself says that it was black ruin without him. There's nothing to miss his hands. Arrah, Miss Norah, a stoir, why would you be so hard on the poor fellow?

NORAH.

You had better go and see that the supper is not being burnt by the fire. Father Moran always says that you are such a good cook, and he is so particular.

Goes up.

BRIDGID.

He is, God bless him. What else has he to care for in this life at all. I'll take a look at baby as I'm passing through the room, and see that he's wanting for nothing.

Enter James supporting Michael Doyle.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

And how many loads of wheat did you get home to-day ?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Twenty one. And its the best wheat I've seen for a long time, sir.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Aye, and what are you doing to-morrow, James ?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

When we've finished with the wheat, we'll be bringing the barley in from the Shroy.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Aye, you're a fine man to have on the farm, James, when the master himself is paralysed and helpless—Is it dark yet outside, Norah ?

NORAH.

It is a dark evening and cloudy.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It may rain to-morrow, what do you say, James ? You might take the lantern, and go to meet Father Moran. It's too dark for him to walk the lane without a light

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Certainly, I will, sir.

Exit James.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

How is my little grandson ?

NORAH.

He is fast asleep, father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Poor wee man. To-day it's just a year and a month since——

NORAH.

Interrupting.

For God's sake, father, please——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Norah, my darling, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you, but you must learn——

NORAH.

I can't help it, father, anything that reminds me of——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Interrupting.

I know, I know, of Dermod. Norah, my child, see how old and helpless I am. My days are numbered. With the last hope for Ireland, the last flicker of life is going from me. A child like you can hardly understand what I have gone through these terrible days of defeat, when every hour writes a new record of English injustice and cruelty. All that I have suffered and seen has taken from me the last remaining hopes that kept my mind cheerful and contented in this crippled shell; and now my dreams of a great future for Ireland are blotted out before my eyes with a big red stain——

NORAH.

Father, why do you despair so?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You are the only thing that gives me strength for the struggle to live a little longer. It is to the young and strong like you, that we old ones must look with hope——In your sons and daughters Ireland may again take her place among the nations. But for me, Norah, the only thing left is to rejoin those who died for their country; and so before my days come to an end, you must not refuse your old father the comfort of seeing you happy under the protection of a brave and honourable man——

NORAH.

To see me happy, father ?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Yes, at least as happy as anybody can be these sad days.

NORAH.

Days of mourning and desolation. Will the tears of thousands of widows and children allow any Irish heart to be happy ? Even those who have no personal sorrow to weep, must mourn with us and with Ireland for her brave sons. Forgive me, father, but I fear the Spirit of Patriotism is burning very low with you.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Child, child, did I ever grudge my country anything ? Did I hesitate to let you go off into the night and across the mountains to guide the Frenchman ? I gave all I had—But now, the struggle is over, we are beaten and our lesson must be patience and resignation—my heart is breaking to see you wasting your youth in sorrow and expectation for those things that can never happen——

NORAH.

Why will you persist in talking to me like this ? You and James make me miserable between you, only a few minutes ago he was again trying to make me change my mind.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Interrupting.

And what did you say ?

NORAH.

Can you have any doubt as to what I said, father ? And you think that you understand me, that you love me.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Uneasily.

And so I do, my darling, so I do.

NORAH.

And yet you can countenance James M'Gowan, and

encourage him to continue insulting me ?

NORAH.

Insulting you ! James is an honest, decent man. His proposal is an honour to you. Your husband is either dead or has deserted you, and Father Moran says there will be no difficulty——

NORAH.

Shrinking.

Father !

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It is a cruel thing to have to say to you, Norah, but there's no excuse for a man who deserts his wife, changes his religion, and betrays his country——

NORAH.

Spare, me, father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

No, Norah, you have taken up such an attitude, that I cannot be silent. God knows that I do not wish to hurt you unnecessarily, but I must speak to try and make you understand and see things as they really are. Dermod's name is not on the list of those executed or in prison, so he must be either dead . . . or——In either case you are free, and I cannot see why you should ruin your young life.

NORAH.

You always suspected Dermod though for a time you said that you understood him. Those who made you suspect him before must have been talking to you——

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Norah, Norah, you are judging me too harshly—I only——

NORAH.

I don't care who has inspired those cruel words. I want you to realise that nothing can change me. Listen once and for all and try and believe what I am going to tell you. . . . I believe in Dermod. . . . No-

body will ever convince me that he is a traitor. The last I saw of him was going like a true man to guide the French Colonel to Donegal. I know I may never see him again till the Judgment Day, but when I do see him, I shall be able to tell him that I have been faithful to him and to his memory, even as he has been faithful to his country. I have sworn it by the love I bear to my God and my child.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Oh! Norah, dear, for God's sake don't pledge yourself for ever?

NORAH.

You have driven me to do so.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Poor little Norah, don't be so bitter, and don't be forgetting that your poor old father wishes what is best for you.

NORAH.

I know, father, and you must forgive me if I was bitter—but promise not to speak of it any more?

Enter Bridgid.

BRIDGID.

The poor wee boy is calling for his mother, ma'am.

NORAH.

I'm coming.

Exit.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Will the supper be ready soon?

BRIDGID.

The fowl will be destroyed on us, if they don't turn in soon. Whist, now, if I don't hear the dog barking, it will be his Reverence for sure.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You're right, I hear his voice. Who is he talking to? That's not James M'Gowan's voice?

BRIDGID.

Master James is showing the light, and his Reverence is talking to a stranger. . . . But here he comes, God bless him.

Enter Father Moran, followed by James.

FATHER MORAN.

God be with all in this house! It's a dark night, Mr. Doyle, and I'm very grateful to you for the kindly thought of sending James with the light.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

You are welcome, Father. And who were you talking to at the door?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Father Moran was, as usual, trying to find out how he could give a poor man a helping hand.

FATHER MORAN.

We took the short cut across Farrell's land, and when we came to the cross-roads, I saw this man following us, so I stopped and spoke to him. But I'm afraid the poor fellow has not all his wits about him.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Bridgid, go and fetch the stranger in, and give him a meal. There are so many homeless people about now.

BRIDGID.

So I will, sir, to be sure. Where have you the lamp put, Master James?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

You'll find it hanging beside the door.

BRIDGID.

Thank you, sir.

Exit Bridgid.

FATHER MORAN.

Where is Norah, Mr. Doyle?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

She is with the baby. Do you want a word with her?

FATHER MORAN.

No—not at present. But there is something I want to tell you, and I don't want her to overhear us. It might break her heart to hear it suddenly.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Poor, poor Norah! Is there anything that can break a heart that is already broken? Poor child, she hasn't had any luck in her short life. It's only your wise words that can be of any help to her now. Shut the door, James. Bridgid is the very devil—excuse me, Father---for listening at doors.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

It's quite safe. She's out in the yard at present.

FATHER MORAN.

Well, Mr. Doyle, I'm just back from Sligo. The fair was not as good as it used to be, with all the soldiery about.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

There's not likely to be much doing while they're in it.

FATHER MORAN.

I saw Father Kelly, who is just after returning from Dublin, and he gave me the official list issued by the Lord Lieutenant last month. Mind, this is the third that we have had. There it is.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Let me see it, Father. Perhaps we may find Dermod's name at last. Let me see it.

FATHER MORAN.

No, Mr. Doyle, it is not there; and I am afraid that there is worse to follow. Tell me, can you remember the name of a French fugitive who took refuge with you last year? Hark! some one is surely walking round the house.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

It must be Bridgid, Father.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

I don't think it is. She had the light with her. Listen!

FATHER MORAN.

I can't hear anything. James, wouldn't it be wise to look if Bridgid has come in yet?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Walks to the door.

Is that you, Bridgid?

BRIDGID.

It is meself, sir.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Is the stranger with you in the kitchen?

BRIDGID.

Faith, no. And it's a quare-looking man he is. I found him to be resting himself on the lawn, under the window. "Will you come in and warm yourself and take a cup of something?" says I. But all the answer I got was: "Let me sit here for a while; I cannot go in anywhere till they have passed."

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It's probably one of those unfortunate men whom the Militia are tracking all over the country. We must——

FATHER MORAN.

Take my advice, and leave the man to go his own way. If he wants anything he'll ask it. He surely knows that no Irishman yet has refused to help a patriot! What happened next, Bridgid?

BRIDGID.

The man got up, and the last I saw of him was straggling round the house. He's a quare man, I tell you, and what's more, a terror to look at.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Enough, Bridgid. Give him anything he asks for. And please bring the supper without any delay. Father Moran must be getting hungry.

BRIDGID.

There will be no delay now.

Exit Bridgid.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Why do you want to know the name of the Frenchman,
Father?

FATHER MORAN.

I will explain to you in a minute. Tell me first.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Colonel Charort. I remember him introducing himself
here in this very room, as if it were yesterday.

FATHER MORAN.

I was afraid that was his name—but I didn't quite like
to trust my memory. And now, please listen, for I
must read you his evidence before the Commission in
Dublin—(reads). Yes: "Carrying despatches from
General Humbert to General Napper Tandy, I was led
by a young native into the midst of the British
encampment, on the far side of Dromahair."

Dermod, in rags, looking thin and ill beyond
recognition, is seen looking in at the window

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Dermod? No! It's impossible! It's a lie.

FATHER MORAN.

Continues reading.

"I was disarmed and taken prisoner." . . . Yes, that's
all that concerns us. Dermod, you see, was not taken,
or shot, so he must----

Groan heard outside.

What's that? Surely I heard something.

JAMES M'GOWAN-

It is only the wind.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

This last blow is more than I can bear. Happy, happy
Stephen O'Dowd, who met a patriot's glorious death
at Ballinamuck. He at least will never know that his
son is a miserable traitor.

A more distinct groan is heard.

JAMES M'GOWAN,

Somebody is surely outside.

Walks towards the window and leans out.

There's no one here. It's queer. I could have sworn that I heard a sound like that of something in pain.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Shut the window, James. Almighty God! It's plain enough to see now why Dermod's name did not appear in the official list. My God, how I loved that boy, and trusted him. How will I ever be able to tell Norah?

FATHER MORAN.

I never like to suspect anyone, and faith, we are suspicious enough about each other in Ireland. But I couldn't quite put all my confidence in a man who was so seldom seen at Mass. What do you think of it all, James?

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Honestly, father, I don't believe a word of all this talk. It's not like Dermod, though I admit that the evidence is very much against him; and, of course, people here were always suspicious of him because of his cautious talk, and everything that has happened has only served to increase these suspicions. In this time of national disaster they find it even harder to believe in any man unless he can show them scars.

FATHER MORAN.

You're a good friend, James, and perhaps you are right. True, the disciples wouldn't believe in the risen Christ till they saw his wounds.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Dermod was brave enough and true enough to his friends. Look how he brought me out of the scrimmage—most people would have had enough to do saving themselves, and how he stayed by me afterwards. It's im-

possible. But what can have happened to him, father, God only knows.

FATHER MORAN.

Sometimes when a man has got no faith, love for life and this world's goods blinds him, and stands between him and his duty.

The voice of Dermod O'Dowd is heard saying, "Duty, duty," followed by a burst of hysterical laughter dying away in the distance.

The Lord protect us !

Crossing himself.

It's quite uncanny. But it is a poor day that brings no comfort, and there's one grand bit of news in the paper. Thomas Hegarty has escaped again ; £1,000 is offered for his head.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Who is that man Hegarty, father ?

FATHER MORAN.

Thomas Hegarty, you surely remember, he was one of the prisoners who escaped and joined Wolfe Tone, and it is said that he fought like a lion beside him on board the French frigate before he was recaptured.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

He was court-martialed in Dublin and sentenced to be hanged.

FATHER MORAN.

After all information had been extracted from him. However, though Major Sirr spent a week of his valuable time in trying to induce him to speak, Thomas Hegarty remained dumb. Father Kelly had some friend connected with the Marlborough Street Riding School who kept him informed.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

Don't you remember ? He could talk of little else at the time but Hegarty's fortitude under the torture.

FATHER MORAN.

Why, they could not discover where he originally came from, and not one of his comrade's names ever escaped his lips.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

I remember, I remember ; but I am growing old.

FATHER MORAN.

Well, it seems that at last they gave it up as a bad job, but as by this he was more dead than alive they sent him back to prison to recover a bit.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

To make it more worth while hanging him, I suppose.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

It makes one's blood boil.

FATHER MORAN.

Interrupting.

But he must have had good friends somewhere, for they are now advertising for his head.

Enter Norah.

NORAH.

Good evening, father ; supper is waiting for you. Will you help father in, James.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

To James.

Wait a moment.

To Father Moran.

Perhaps you had better tell her now.

FATHER MORAN.

I feel that I ought, and it is a sad duty to have to perform. The saddest perhaps that I ever had to do in my life.

Turning to Norah.

Norah, my child, prepare yourself to listen to the sad news I have to tell you.

NORAH.

Is it more about Dermod ?

FATHER MORAN.

It is so.

NORAH.

Interrupting.

Then pardon me, father, I cannot listen to you. I have decided not to discuss him with anyone.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

For shame, Norah. You are forgetting who you are talking to.

FATHER MORAN.

Let her be, poor child. Norah, my child, be strong. May God in his mercy give you strength to bear what I have to tell you.

NORAH.

Is he dead then ?

FATHER MORAN.

To his country—yes.

NORAH.

That is not true !

FATHER MORAN.

I wish it wasn't. He betrayed Colonel Charort to——

NORAH.

It's false.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

How can you. Norah ?

FATHER MORAN.

It's printed in the official report. Here are Colonel Charort's own words.

NORAH.

Printed in the official report ! Ha, ha, ha. So it must be true. Printed by whom ? Printed by our bitterest enemy—by an enemy without truth or honesty so we must believe it. And you, Father Moran, and you father, and you, James, who were the first to preach unity, and to tell us we must learn to trust each other. You now are the first to believe in their printed report, and the first to condemn a comrade who is not here

to stand before you and defend himself. How can you expect this country to gain its freedom when a few lying words, printed in an English report, are enough to make you call an Irishman a traitor? My Dermot a traitor. Ha, ha, ha.

Exit R. laughing hysterically.

FATHER MORAN.

Oh, it's no use talking to her, poor child.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

He is her husband, after all, you must not be offended with her.

FATHER MORAN.

God forbid. And I tell you, Mr. Doyle, that it breaks my heart to have to believe all these terrible things about poor Dermot.

JAMES.

Still I can't believe it.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

There is no doubt you are a generous boy, James.

BRIDGID.

Entering.

Are you coming in to supper at all, at all, master?

MICHAEL DOYLE.

All right, Bridgid, tell Miss Norah that we are going to begin. Will you lead the way, father?

FATHER MORAN.

Thank you, Mr. Doyle.

Exeunt Father Moran, Michael Doyle and James door L.

BRIDGID.

Crosses to door R. and tries to open door.

Miss Norah, Ma'am, the master is asking for you to come up to the supper.

NORAH.

Speaking from the next room.

Tell him that I am busy with the child.

BRIDGID.

But surely, Ma'am, the child is sleeping. Well, well, I

don't suppose you'll care to be sitting with them after the words you had.

Enter Dermod. He stands by the door.
Mercy on us, but what's that? Oh, and it's you, my poor fellow. Come in then and welcome. You'll be better off by the fire than stravaging round the house, and for shure you're only annoying the master. Seat yourself by the fire. Now, why wouldn't you come in before?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

There is nothing now that prevents me coming in.

BRIDGID.

And who was it that was preventing you coming?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Nobody but myself and my thoughts.

BRIDGID.

I'd like to know what is the matter with you at all, my good fellow. Sit down and rest yourself awhile, while I am getting you a bit to eat.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

There's no hurry. Tell me where's the master?

BRIDGID.

He's taking his supper above in the room. But faith he has the poor appetite these days—it's a long time since I've seen him make a decent meal.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

What's wrong with him?

BRIDGID.

Wrong? Deed it's the whole world that's wrong with him. Since the trouble came on him a year ago he's not the same man. There's neither joy nor comfort in this house since Master Dermod did what Judas himself would have been ashamed of doing.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

And what was that?

BRIDGID.

Looking at him suspiciously.

And what concern is that of your's at all if I may be bold to ask? Ay, you are a terror on giving me questions. I'd like to know what it has to do with you at all.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

True, Ma'am, it has nothing to do with me whatsoever.

BRIDGID.

Deed it isn't me that would be whispering the unkindly word against poor Master Dermod if it wasn't for seeing the misery he's brought on Miss Norah and the poor, dear master, and to think of that innocent baby now whose father's name——

DERMOD O'DOWD.

His father's name.

BRIDGID.

Ay, it will be the curse and the shame of this place for all times. God only knows what took him to be selling that French fellow to the English, and, not content with that, to be sending them over here, bringing destruction and misery to all that's in it. Was it the money he was to get? Or was it a grand position at Dublin Castle they promised him?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

And where did you get all this information?

BRIDGID.

Where is it that you come from, my man, if you have not heard as much as that? 'Deed it's been the talk of the countryside for months. And now, haven't they got it all printed here as plain, as plain—wasn't I working just the other side of the door, when Father Moran was reading it out.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

And you heard it all?

BRIDGID.

I'm a bit hard of hearing, but what I did hear was, that

it was the fishy list that Father Moran had, and the trouble was that Master Dermod's name was not on it.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Then Dermod O'Dowd's name is not among the list of those in prison or executed, and as his friends are sure that he must have sold himself, and his country, and they only disagree as to what was his price. . . . Money, or the red coat and gold lace of Dublin Castle.

BRIDGID.

That is so.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

And did it never strike any of them that Dermod O'Dowd may not have given his true name, so as to save his family from persecution?

BRIDGID.

It would have been a cruel and foolish thing for him to have done. . . . Leaving nothing but suspicion and sorrow to the Master and Miss Norah, and Master James—as fine a boy as ever came to live—after her too. All the trouble and the misery. The baby born before his time, and the poor Master taking a stroke, and will never be able to do a hands turn with the harvest again.

DERMOD O'DOWD.

God!

BRIDGID.

Why don't you tell me, and not be ashamed, if you met Master Dermod in Dublin. Maybe you are a friend of his?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

I'm afraid that by my friendship for others I became his worst enemy.

Leans his head on his hands.

BRIDGID.

What are you saying at all? Wait now, its hungry that you are. I'll be getting you a nice slice of meat from

the master's table—sure he never begrudged anyone anything.

Exit Bridgid. Dermod walks slowly to the table, and picks up the paper left by Fr. Moran. When he has read it, it slips out of his hands, and he sits down heavily on a chair by the fire place. Norah enters at door, R. walks slowly across the stage, pausing for a few moments at the window, and humming softly a lullaby to the baby which she carries asleep in her arms. Dermod, unnoticed by Norah, gets up at her appearance and holds out his arms to her where she is standing by the window, then sits down again. He makes a movement to follow her when she makes her exit by door L.

BRIDGID.

Her voice is heard talking to Norah in the passage.

I've got a few tasty bits here for the poor man . . .

Entering.

There's something nice for you. It's starved you look anyway.

Noticing that Dermod shows signs of fainting.

What's wrong with you at all. Is it a drink you are wanting ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Almost inaudibly.

Water ?

BRIDGID.

Arrah, musha, and what's taken him. Here, quench yourself, my poor fellow, and take courage. God's help is nearer than the door . . . Is it sick you are ? I'll go and fetch Father Moran, he is a great man for cures. Wouldn't Paddy Dunn's little Mick be in the grave now but for him ?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Don't be troubling yourself. I must be moving on in a minute . . .



Photo by

Roe MacMahon.

ACT III.

NORAH—Dermod, my husband, you have not died in vain.

Enter Father Moran, followed by James
assisting Michael Doyle.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

I am afraid, Father, that it was a poor meal that you had ?

FATHER MORAN.

Grand, thank you, Mr. Doyle, grand. One enjoys one's supper after a day's hard riding. . . . You see I had asked Father Kelly to make searching enquiries about Dermod, and he tells me that he spared neither the time or the money in doing so. . . .

MICHAEL DOYLE.

How can I ever repay you, Father ?

FATHER MORAN.

There is no doubt that his name has not appeared in any of the lists, and Charort's evidence is conclusive. I am afraid I cannot imagine any explanation that can exonerate your unfortunate son-in-law.

Dermod is sitting as if asleep with his head against the wall.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Is that the stranger asleep over there ?

JAMES MCGOWAN.

It is, sir.

FATHER MORAN.

Because, even if you put those lists out of consideration, I don't see what else can have happened to him, and I think James is quite right when he says—that it is only wise to trust those that suffered for their country, and bear the marks of the blood they have shed, the wounds they have gained in their struggle.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Alas, Father, it's only too true, nowadays the men you can trust all bear the marks of English tyranny . . . blood and wounds. . . .

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Rising.

Blood and wounds . . . Ha, ha . . .

Makes towards door L.

FATHER MORAN.

Who in the name of God is that man? Surely I know
his voice. Show me you face, my son. . . . Stop.

Exit Dermod.

NORAH.

Hide that man somewhere! Stop him going out! The
house is surrounded. I saw the readcoats outside
round every corner. They must be after this unfor-
tunate man . . .

The report of a volley is heard outside.

Oh . . .

FATHER MORAN.

God rest his soul whoever he was. It is too late now.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

More murder! When will God put a stop to it all?

DERMOD O'DOWD.

Stumbling backwards into the room.

If it's blood and wounds you want to exonerate a man
from being called a traitor . . . There——

Tears his shirt, showing his breast red
with blood, and falls heavily to the
ground.

NORAH.

Springing towards him, kneels beside him
and feels his heart.

Dermod! It's Dermod . . . They have killed him.
Killed you.

JAMES M'GOWAN.

It's Dermod! May God forgive us.

MICHAEL DOYLE.

Dermod killed! and we calling him a traitor.

Mutters incoherent words, while his head
falls backwards on the cushion.

ENGLISH OFFICER.

His voice is heard outside.

Open the door in the King's name !

JAMES MCGOWAN.

It is open, sir.

Enter officer and two soldiers.

ENGLISH OFFICER.

I am here to demand the surrender of the escaped prisoner, Thomas Hegarty.

FATHER MORAN.

Thomas Hegarty ?

ENGLISH OFFICER.

Who was seen to enter this house. Ah . . . Thomas Hegarty, I arrest you in the King's name on the charge of Rebellion, Conspiracy, and breaking from his Majesty's prison.

FATHER MORAN.

Dermod ! Thomas Hegarty.

To Dermod.

Man, dear, will you ever forgive us. Thomas Hegarty, the man who let himself be tortured sooner than speak a word.

ENGLISH OFFICER.

The very man and a most dangerous rebel. You seem to me to know a little too much, reverend sir. Permit me, madam.

FATHER MORAN.

Haven't you enough pity to allow this man to die in peace? He is mortally wounded, and will soon have to face a more righteous judgment than yours.

ENGLISH OFFICER.

I must warn you, reverend sir, not to interfere. My orders are — dead or alive—to capture Thomas Hegarty.

NORAH.

Then, sir, your triumph is premature. The man whom

The Memory of the Dead.

you have treacherously murdered is not Thomas Hegarty. His name is Dermod O'Dowd, and he is my husband.

Officer makes gesture to soldiers to arrest
Norah.

My Dermod, my husband, you have not died in vain. For I swear by your innocent blood, shed for your country, by your unknown deeds, by your patriot's heart, and by your love of me—my husband. I swear that I will bring up your child to take your place, to live as you lived, to die as you died—a hero for our country; and I know that there will be thousands of others who will keep sacred in their hearts your memory and your love for your country, and on that love they will rebuild our Ireland free!

FATHER MORAN.

Kneeling down.

Amen.

CURTAIN.

M

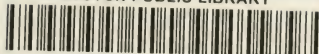
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